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Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 15 (2011) 3895–3901

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**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

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WCES 2011

## Do or Die Politics: Psycho-Demographic Influence on Attitude towards Election Rigging in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The study examined the influence of psychological and demographic variables on attitude towards election rigging in Ekiti State, Nigeria. 950 participants which comprises of 560 males and 390 females in the sixteen Local Government Areas of Ekiti State, Nigeria participated in the study. Results revealed that of all the psycho-demographic variables only literacy status, sex and locus of control independently predicted attitude towards election rigging among the electorates. However, the psycho-demographic variables jointly predicted attitude towards election rigging among the electorates [ $R^2 = .236$ ,  $F(6, 802) = 42.20$ ;  $P < .05$ ]. Also, Analysis of Variance showed an interaction effect of age, sex and locus of control on attitude towards election rigging [ $F(1, 949) = 4.553$ ,  $P < .05$ ]. The implications of these findings were discussed.

**Keywords:** Election Rigging; Locus of control; Sex; Age; Electorates

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### 1. Introduction

In Nigeria, many elections have been conducted since the first elections in 1923 to the last one in 2007. Also the electorates have grown from 5,000 adults to over 67.75 million electorates of 18 years of age and above, as is presently the case in Nigeria (Nnoli, 1995; Independent National Electoral Commission, 2011). Furthermore, the elective posts have increased from four unofficial positions with virtually no rewards and legislative powers in 1923 to 469 legislative positions at the National level as at 2011 with immense powers, rewards and patronage to share (Nnoli, 1995; Independent National Electoral Commission, 2011).

Regrettably, the history of elections in Nigeria has shown that Nigerians cannot rely on them as veritable means of installing the kind of leaders they want and by implication in changing the material conditions of their existence. This is because elections in Nigeria have been marred by ugly incidents of electoral malpractice (Nnoli, 1995).

As the political class gradually acquired wrong and dangerous political culture, elections in Nigeria became a “do or die” affair among the politicians. Election periods were usually battle times with an expected outburst of violence in different parts of the country, either due to electoral fraud or as a way to perpetrate electoral fraud (Anifowose, 2004). “Do or die” refers to the readiness of a politician to use all means, any means including diabolical, manipulative, violent and criminal means to ensure victory in an election. Unfortunately, all the machinery for the enforcement of law and order and maintenance of peace were all enmeshed in the network of electoral malpractices, thereby making the entire electoral process a fraud. Regrettably, defective electoral process and elections in Nigeria had led to the termination of democratic rule three times by the military. First, in 1966, the

ill-fated democratic rule was truncated by a military coup, second, in 1983, by another coup d'état, and third, by a military takeover in 1993. It is worth mentioning at this point that at each point of military intervention, democracy in Nigeria was aborted, and Nigerians felt relieved from the clutches of the greedy politicians and pseudo democracy.

A noticeable consequence of this was that the wrong candidates usually emerge as winners of elections, a phenomenon that explains the nation's record of poor leadership, political stagnation, and economic backwardness. The conduct of a free and fair election is a major feature of democracy because it gives legitimacy to a government, and it is a prerequisite for positive socio-political developments in any given society. It also enhances political mobilisation and participation of the electorate and tends to perpetuate a positive political culture in such a society.

Electoral malpractices are palpable illegalities committed with a corrupt, fraudulent or sinister intention to influence an election in favour of certain candidate(s) by means such as illegal voting, bribery, cheating and undue influence, intimidation and other acts of coercion exerted on voters, falsifications of results, fraudulent announcement of a defeated candidate as a winner with or without altering the recorded results. Electoral fraud is an illegal interference with the process of an election to bring about a desired election outcome. The problem posed by this illegality stems more from its insidiousness, because it is perpetrated in utmost secrecy which effectively shields it from the prying eyes of election observers and the voting public (Ogbeidi, 2010).

An individual's attitude to something is his or her positive or negative disposition to a specific issue, event or circumstance (Encarta Dictionary, 2008; McKenna, 2009). Attitudes are formed based on personality, knowledge or perception (Adejumo, 2009; Kalat, 1988). If people do not recognise the activity which they may be witnessing, or in which they may be participating, as 'corrupt', they are not likely to react to it as such; they are also unlikely to attempt to change the behaviour (Independent Commission Against Corruption, 1994).

Like any other human behaviour, perceived election rigging can be influenced by a number of factors which may be internal or external, short term or long term. Locus of control refers to the extent to which individuals believe that they can control events that affect them (Rotter, 1954). Individuals with internal locus of control believe that rewards result primarily from their own behaviour, capacities and efforts and these individuals are generally more self-reliant individuals who have high self-esteem levels and healthy personalities. On the contrary, individuals with an external locus of control believe that rewards result primarily from luck, chance, fate or external forces regardless of their own behaviors and these individuals are generally self-distrusted and unhappy persons with low self-esteem levels who do not perceive and attribute value to themselves (Cüceloglu, 1993). While individuals with internal locus of control believe that events and their consequences develop as a result of their own behaviour and acts, individuals with external locus of control cannot make correlations between the events and their own efforts and behaviour; and thus, they believe that occurrences stem from others' behaviour or happen accidentally (Nasser and Abouchedid, 2006).

Nigeria's political history is replete with unpleasant cases of election rigging. Except for 1993 presidential election which was unfortunately annulled by the military, all other elections have been rigged in part or on the whole. In the South west of Nigeria, the mass of the people have always reacted against perceived election rigging. In 1965, 1983, and 1993 there were violent protests in major cities of the South West [Kurfi, 2005].

Ekiti State of Nigeria was part of the old Ondo State up till 1996 when it became an independent state. The Ekitis have not only been politically active but have been sensitive to election rigging. In 1983, the Ondo State gubernatorial election was rigged; there were violent protest and destruction of lives and property in the area. In 1993 as well the people agitated against the annulment of the presidential election. It is to be noted that between 1999 till 2010, the state has had eight governors or acting governors when the maximum should have been three. The high rate of instability in political leadership could be associated with electoral malpractices. Huge resources have been expended to prosecute court cases arising from disputes over who were the true winners of gubernatorial elections. The continual crises in Ekiti state arising from electoral malpractices make the state a good choice for the study.

The purpose of this study is therefore to investigate electorates' attitude towards election rigging, and the effect of locus of control (psychological factor); as well as age, sex, literacy level (demographic factors) in predicting the attitude to election rigging by the electorates.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Setting

This study took place in Ekiti state, one of the 36 states in Nigeria. Ekiti State is located in the South-Western part of Nigeria. It covers an area of approximately 6,353 square kilometers, and lies between longitude  $7^0 40^1$  and latitude  $5^0 15^1$ E. Nigeria is Africa's most populous country with an estimated population of 145 million.

### 2.2. Design

This study used ex-post facto design. This design was employed because participants were not subjected to any direct manipulation by the researcher, but the independent variables had their influences prior to the commencement of the study

### 2.3. Participants and sample

Residents in all the 177 wards across the sixteen Local Government Areas in Ekiti state, Nigeria participated in the study. Nine hundred and fifty participants were selected following multi-stage sampling. The sixteen Local Government Areas of the state were purposively selected for the study. The list of the wards in each Local Government Area/cluster was obtained, from which at least 5 wards were randomly selected through balloting, yielding 112 wards/cluster. The residents in each ward/cluster were then selected conveniently (ADO 180; IREPODUN/IFELODUN 50; IJERO 50; EKITI WEST 50; EFON 80; IDO/OSI 80; ILEJEMEJE 80; MOBA 80; OYE 80; EKITI EAST 80; IKOLE 80; ISE/ORUN 50; EMURE 50; GBOYIN 50; EKITI SOUTH 80; and IKERE 80) making a total of 1200 questionnaires.

Participants' ages ranged between 17 and 78 years with mean of 47.09 years ( $SD=12.44$ ). The sample comprised 560 males (58.9 percent) and 390 females (41.1 percent). 716 (75.4 percent) were literates while 234 (24.6 percent) were illiterates. 803 (84.5 percent) belong to a political party while 147 (15.5 percent) were not member of any political party. The respondents political experience ranged between one year to twenty years with mean of 7.12 years ( $SD=4.59$ ). 397 (41.8 percent) indicated they belong to Peoples Democratic Party; 390 (41.1 percent) belong to Action Congress of Nigeria; 16 belong to Labour Party while 147 (15.5percent) did not indicate their political party.

### 2.4. Instrument

A 44-item structured questionnaire was used to gather information. The questionnaire was divided into 3 sections: Section A with 11 items elicited information about demographic data of the participants including: age, sex, marital status, literacy status, name of town, name of political party; and political experience.

The 20-item Section B captures information regarding respondents' attitude to corruption. This instrument was developed by the researcher following a focus group discussion added to items gathered from literature on the subject. Some of the items in the scale include "politics is a do or die affair". The instrument had a Likert-type response format ranging between strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Items gathered were subjected to face and content validity. Psychometric analysis of the items included: (a) content validity ratio (b) item analysis and, (c) internal consistency analysis using Cronbach's alpha. The questionnaire was distributed to ten different experts that cut across the fields of education, psychology, psychometrics, sociology and political science. The content validity value of each of the item was calculated using Lawshe, (1975) Content Validity Ratio. Only one item attracted less than 0.6 and the item was dropped. The remaining 20 items were also subjected to item-total correlation. A minimum correlation of .30 was set for inclusion in the scale. A coefficient of 0.75 was reported for this scale. The standardized Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.68 was also obtained. The norms established were  $N=950$ ,  $X=41.70$ ,  $SD=13.03$ . High scores on the scale indicate a positive attitude or greater tendency towards election rigging, vice versa.

Section C was designed to assess personality. Locus of control was measured by a 13-item scale developed by Rotter (1966) which consisted of Yes/No rating. Cook and Wall (1980) obtained an overall mean of 8.30 (British

samples) and 5.72 (Nigerian samples) for the scale on 390 British sample and 600 Nigerian samples respectively. The developer reported internal consistency alpha of 0.62. However, a coefficient of 0.60 was established during this study.

### 2.5. Procedure

The study was preceded by a pilot study in a separate local government in a neighbouring state (Akure South, in Ondo State). With the help of five research assistants, each of the selected local governments were visited one after the other during which residents were accidentally approached and intimated with the purpose of the survey, and request for their participation. Efforts were made by the research assistants to translate the contents of the items to Yoruba Language to enable the illiterate residents to participate in the study. Only residents who gave informed and autonomous consent to participate were selected. Completion of the questionnaire took an average of 30 minutes. Of the total 1200 questionnaires distributed, only 950 were correctly filled and fit for analysis, representing 79 percent response rate. Returned questionnaires were coded, entered into excel software and later transferred into the SPSS computer software for statistical analysis.

### 3. Result

Data gathered from this study were analyzed using Multiple Regression Analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All calculations were done at 0.05 level of confidence. The results are presented in the table below:

Table 1: Multiple regression summary table showing independent and joint effect of psychosocial factors on attitude towards election rigging

Predictors	Independent effects					Joint effects		
	B	S.E.	Beta	t	P	F	P	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>
Locus of control	.380	.157	.075	2.413	< .05			
Age	4.283	.032	.041	1.319	> .05			
Sex	11.960	.833	.453	14.357	< .05	42.198	< .05	.236
Marital status	1.040	.642	.051	1.620	> .05			
Political experience	.130	.090	.046	1.437	> .05			
Literacy level	2.939	.943	.098	3.116	< .05			

Table 1 above showed that locus of control, age, sex, marital status, years of political experience and literacy level would significantly and jointly predict attitude toward election rigging among electorates [ $R^2 = .236$ ,  $F [6, 802] = 42.20$ ,  $P < .05$ ]. The table also revealed that locus of control ( $\beta = 0.08$ ;  $t = 2.41$ ;  $P < .05$ ); sex ( $\beta = 0.45$ ;  $t = 14.36$ ;  $P < .05$ ); and literacy level ( $\beta = 0.10$ ;  $t = 3.12$ ;  $P < .05$ ) would significantly and independently predict attitude towards election rigging among Nigerian electorates. However, age, marital status and political experience did not have independent effect on attitude towards election rigging.

Table 2: Multiple regression summary table showing independent and joint effect of psychosocial factors on attitude towards election rigging

Source	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	df	F	P
Sex [ A]	31392.466	31392.466	1	243.654	< .05
Locus of control [B]	516.030	516.030	1	4.005	< .05
Age [C]	7.440	7.440	1	.058	> .05
A X B	.543	.543	1	.004	> .05
A X C	1742.515	1742.515	1	13.525	< .05
B X C	12.876	12.876	1	.100	> .05
A X B X C	586.552	586.552	1	4.553	< .05

Error	121367.755	128.841	942
Total	161051.883	949	

Result revealed significant main effect of sex [ $F [1, 942] = 243.654; P < .05$ ] and locus of control [ $F [1, 942] = 4.005; P < .05$ ] on attitude toward election rigging. There was no significant difference for age differences. However, there was a significant interaction effect of sex, age and locus of control on attitude toward election rigging [ $F [1, 942] = 4.55; P < .05$ ]. The result of performing Fisher's Least Significant Difference [LSD] test with a 0.05 alpha level revealed that attitude towards election rigging was associated with young male externalizers [Table 3 and Figure 1 and figure 2].

Table 3: Summary of means on attitude towards election rigging

Sex	Locus of control	Age	Mean	S.D	N
Male	Internalizer	Young	48.171	10.906	41
Male	Internalizer	Old	46.137	10.904	234
Male	Externalizer	Young	51.932	12.424	44
Male	Externalizer	Old	46.378	12.788	241
Female	Internalizer	Young	31.622	9.442	45
Female	Internalizer	Old	32.579	9.353	121
Female	Externalizer	Young	31.125	9.717	40
Female	Externalizer	Old	36.826	11.669	184

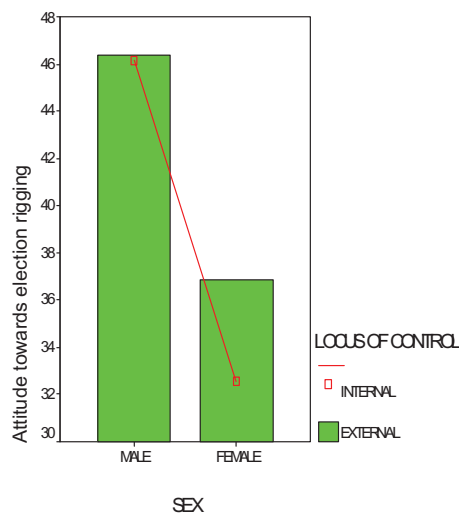


Figure 1: Interaction effect of sex, locus of control and age (young electorates) on attitude towards election rigging

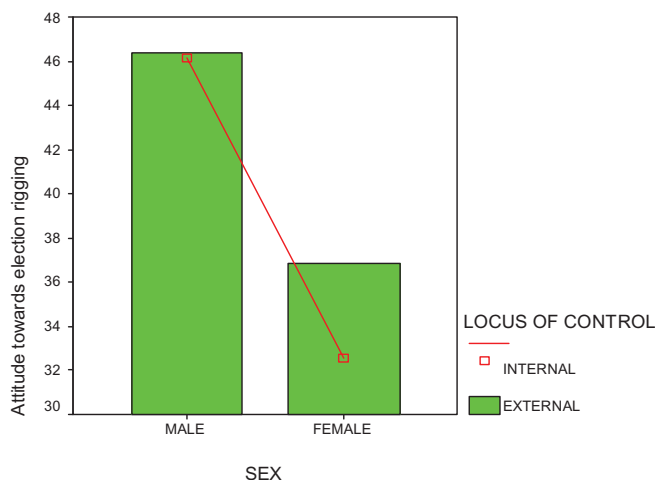


Figure 2: Interaction effect of sex, locus of control and age (old electorates) on attitude towards election rigging

#### 4. Discussion

This study provides useful information about effects of certain psychological and demographic factors and attitude to election rigging from the perspective of stake holders in a rigging endemic society. It reveals that locus of control, age, sex, marital status, years of political experience and literacy level would significantly and jointly predict attitude toward election rigging among electorate. It was also found that there was an interaction effect of age, sex and locus of control on attitude toward election rigging among electorate. The young male externalizers were found to most vulnerable in their disposition towards election rigging in Nigeria. In a related study, Schultz and Schultz (2005) pointed out that significant differences in locus of control have not been found for adults in a U.S. population. However, Schultz and Schultz (2005) also noted that there might be specific sex-based differences for specific categories of item to assess locus of control—for example, they cited evidence that men may have a greater internal locus for questions related to academic achievement (Strickland & Haley, 1980; cited in Schultz & Schultz, 2005).

Research has shown significant relationship between personality and attitude (Adejuwon, 2010). Precisely, in the formation of attitudes, personality and socialisation are two important variables, necessitating the examination of the role of psychological and socio-demographic variables in this study. An individual's personality could form the basis for response to a specific situation or event. The indirect role of brain activities and other physiological processes such as endocrine function could affect sensation, perception and interpretation of events and stimuli in one's environment (Adejumo, 2009; Kalat, 1988). These processes influence human attitudes and behaviour based on; personal definition of values, idea formation, and motivation for actions. In consonance with findings of this study, Aldwin and Gilmer (2004) observed that there is evidence that changes in locus of control in later life relate more visibly to increased externality, rather than reduced internality, if the two concepts are taken to be orthogonal. Evidence cited by Schultz and Schultz (2005), for example Heckhausen and Schulz (1995) or Ryckman and Malikosi, 1975 (cited in Schultz & Schultz, 2005), suggests that locus of control increases in internality up until middle age. Externalizers for instance are more likely to have higher disposition towards election rigging as found out in this study, this might not be unconnected with their low disinhibition, talkativeness and tendency to explore or take risks compared to internalizer who are more reserved, moody, and emotionally stable (McKenna, 2009). Hence, the personality of an individual could predict his attitude to events around him; such as positive disposition towards election rigging.



## 5. Conclusion

This study has shown that locus of control, age, sex, marital status, years of political experience and literacy level would significantly and jointly predict attitude toward election rigging among electorates. The study has also revealed an interaction effect on age, sex and locus of control on attitude towards election rigging. It is expedient for all stakeholders in Nigerian politics to ensure free and fair elections. Government alone cannot be held responsible for the anomalies during the polls. Thus, people's orientation towards elections should be changed to better the lot of the country.

Job creation should be of utmost interest to government as the youths are the most vulnerable group who indulge in election rigging. This might not be unconnected with their joblessness.

Since credible election is the foundation for credible political leadership that could ensure socio-economic development, banish poverty, provide jobs, build infrastructure and make the citizen happy.

If the people make their votes count, election apathy will reduce, rate of political participation will increase, trust and confidence in political leaders will improve, peace will reign in the land and the people will enjoy prosperity. Achieving this will depend on attitude of the individual towards election rigging. If all or majority of the electorates want their votes to count, do or die politics of the few cannot upturn the will and the wish of the generality of the people.

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